

REMARKS

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

The Office Action and prior art relied upon have been carefully considered. In an effort to expedite the prosecution claims 1-3 and 7-12 have been cancelled and allowable claim 5 has been rewritten to incorporate the limitations of intervening claims 4 and 5.

Claims 4 and 6 were rejected under 35 USC 103 (a) as unpatentable over Shimizu in combination with Halley. These claims have been rewritten in independent format to include the limitations of the intervening claims. For the reasons to be discussed below the rejected claims are believed to be allowable over the cited art.

The specification has been amended as required in paragraph 4 of the Office Action. In response to the Examiner's requirement in paragraph 5 of the Office Action, reference to the heating means in the specification has avoided using reference number 8. Instead the heating zone of the heating means retains the reference number. Since the previous conflict is avoided there is no need to amend the drawings.

With respect to the prior art rejection, contrary to the Examiner's assertion, Halley (US 3,518,109) does not teach that in a hot dip galvanizing process desirable coating thickness can be obtained by adjusting the strip length.

Halley teaches the control of coating thickness by adjusting the distance between coating rolls between which the the strip passes. Consequently the combination of Shimizu in view of Halley fails to present a *prima facie* case of obviousness and all the claims presently in the application are believed to be allowable.

In view of the above, consideration and allowance are, therefore, respectfully solicited.

In the event the Examiner believes an interview might serve to advance the prosecution of this application in any way, the undersigned attorney is available at the telephone number noted below.

The Director is hereby authorized to charge any fees, or credit any overpayment, associated with this communication, including any extension fees, to CBLH Deposit Account No. 22-0185, under Order No. 21029-00272-US from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Dated: June 22, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

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